

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11 OES-09
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FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2526
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUBUMBASHI 0822

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: EMIN
SUBJECT: KOLWEZI COBALT

REF: (A) STATE 171040, (B) KINSHASA 818, (C) LUBUMBASHI 0819

1. REFTTEL B PROVIDES LATEST LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COBALT PRODUCTION. BASED ON UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH PRODUCTION OF 1,000 MT IN JUNE, MOST OBSERVERS ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT ANNUAL PRODUCTION SHOULD BE FAIRLY HIGH, POSSIBLY AS HIGH AS 1977. NEW EMPHASIS PUT ON MAXIMUM COBALT PRODUCTION WHICH BEGAN WHEN CHARLES PICQUET ARRIVED IN FEBRUARY COULD WITH INCREASING COBALT PRICES RESULTED IN HIGH PRODUCTION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING KOLWEZI ATTACK. INITIAL ESTIMATE IS THAT GCM MANAGERMENTS WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP COBALT PRODUCTION AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE.

2. CONSULATE IS FOLLOWING VERY CLOSELY PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS OF ALL INSTALLATIONS IN KOLWEZI. IT SHOULD BE NOTED HOWEVER THAT ALTHOUGH APPROXIMATELY 85-90 PC OF
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COBALT IS MINED IN KOLWEZI, IT IS TREATED BOTH AT LUILU AND KOLEZI(55 PC IN 1976) AND SHITURN IN LIKASI (45 IN 1976) IF THE MINES IN KOLWEZI FUNCTION BUT PROBLEMS DEVELOP IN METALLURGICAL INSTALLATIONS SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF COBALT CAN STILL BE PROCESSED IN LIKASI.

3. VICE CONSUL IS CURRENTLY VISITING KOLWEZI, WHILE

HE WIL ME MAKING INQUIRIES INTO MINING ACTIVITIES IT IS VERY DOUBTFUL THAT ON-SIGHT INVESTIGATION WOULD REVEAL VERY MUCH TO ANYONE EXCEPT TO HIGHLY-TRAINED EXPERT. WE BELIEVE IT IS BETTER TO RELY ON STATISTICS AND COMMENTS MADE BY RETURNING TECHNICIANS. IN THE PAST THEIR REPORTING HAS BEEN QUITE RELIABLE.

4. COBALT DURING 1977 WAS SHIPPED PREMARILY FROM SHABA TO MATADI VIA THE VOIE NATIONALE (87 OC) THE REMAINING 13 PC WAS SHIPPED VIA EAST LONDON. THERE IS PRESENTLY TALK THAT GECAMINES MIGHT USE BACKHAUL SPACE ON PLANES BRINGING IN PROVISIONS AND EQUIPMENT TO SHIP SOME QUANTITIES OF COBALT BY AIR TO BRUSSELS. THIS IS STILL IN THE DICUSSION STAGES.

5. CHARLES PICQUET HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN ALL GECAMINES AFFAIRS SINCE ARRIVING IN FEBRUARY. HIS OFFICIAL TITLE IS ADMINISTRATOR DIRECTOR IN OF GECAMINES WHICH IS THE NUMBER TWO POSITION IN THE COMPANY BEHIND DELEGATE GENERA UMBA KYAMITALA. HE SUPERVISES ALL OF COMPANY'S TECHNICAL OPERATIONS WHILE NUMBER THREE DIRECTOR NORBERT ROCHER SUPERVISES ALL FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS. DURING FREQUENT ABSENCES OF UMBA DURING THE LAST TWO MONTHS, PICQUET HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN ALL OPERATIONAL AND PLANNING ACTIVITIES. DURING HEIGHT OF KOLWEZI OPERATIONS HE HAD COMMAND POST
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SET UP AT HIS HOUSE AND MANNED 24 HOURS PER DAY. AS NOTED IN REFTEL C ACTIVITIES ATTRACK EXPATRIATES BACK TO KOLWEZI HAVE BEEN HINDERED BY PRESIDENTS MOBUTUS DECISION T SUSPEND ALL ALL EVACUATED KOLWEZI EXPATRIATES AND ZAIRIAN UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE ROLE OF EXPATRIATES IN GECAMINES

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